

Tour of Southern Utah — September 2004

By: Bill Reiss

Bill Reiss completed a one-week tour of southern Utah last September. Here is his ride report:



In September I was fortunate to take a bicycle tour of Southern Utah, put on by Adventure Cyclists. It was a 7-day ride that started and ended in St. George. There were 98 people riding. Most of us camped and few stayed in motels.

The first day we rode from St George to Zion campground, just outside Zion N.P. (61 miles). That afternoon we rode into the park to see the sights. The wind blew pretty hard that evening but settled down by morning.

The next day we were on our bikes by 7:30. The ride started on a bike path through the entrance to Zion. Then we started up a steep switchback hill. At the first tunnel we had to get off our bikes and wait to be shuttled through by truck. Bikes are not allowed in this tunnel. We continued climbing then rode through another tunnel, and then into Hatch for our second night of camping. (62 miles)



The third day we woke up to freezing temperatures. There was frost on the tents. It warmed up pretty fast when the sun came up. Then it was a short ride (23 miles) to Ruby Inn campground at the entrance to Bryce Canyon N.P. We had our lunch and then took a shuttle bus into the park. That night we hiked down into the canyon. It is just amazing how many stars are out when you're away from the lights and smog. "Awesome"

The next day we rode to Panquitch (23miles). We stopped before we got to camp and had a smoothie at an old house they said was the first house built in Panquitch in 1946. They called it the Rock house with walls 2-½ ft thick.

Day five we climbed and climbed for 36 miles elevations from 6500 ft. to 10,500 ft. to Cedar Breaks. Then we started down a great down hill, but it rained and sleeted most of the way down. Even with the bad weather it only took 1-½ hours to get down to Cedar City (62 total miles).

The last day was an easy ride back to St George, (72miles)

All in all it was a wonderful experience in beautiful country. I would do it again without hesitation. We covered 311 miles in 6 days of riding.